Ans Febru. 22 - 1847.

To the Society of Inquiry Princeton Chusan June 6th 1845

Dear Brethren

In compliance with the request of one of the secretaries of the Soc^{y} of Inquiry I now begin a letter to you. The object of your society is to gain information in regard to the operations of the benevolent institutions of our Church, as well as of all benevolent institutions. If I knew just what subjects you would like to be informed about, I might give a more satisfactory letter. Things with which we have become familiar, though the stranger might regard them with interest, cease in a great measure to interest us, & we pass them as not worth mentioning. As to the matter of exhortation I shall presume that you have no need of that, for you have the Bible - you have constantly brought before you the state of the heathen world - & all of you in seeking preparation for the ministry profess a desire to obey the Master in his last command: & were I disposed to urge upon my brethren the duty of prayerfully considering whether the Call is for them to go to the heathen what could I say that has not already many times been said? You know that to be saved there must be belief on the Lord Jesus Christ - you know that no one can believe on him of whom he has not heard - & you know what proportion of the inhabitants of the earth have not yet heard, & cannot hear until some be sent to tell them; & knowing this it is left with each one to consider & determine how much the Lord has given him ability to do that by his instrumentality some of the heathen may hear of the way of life by Jesus Christ. I hope all the students of the Seminary have seen the remarks of the dying Missionary, Rev S. A. Thorp - as found in the Foreign Missionary for Nov. 1844. & may I repeat them? The last day that he used his pen, he said to his wife, "I must write to that

Society at Princeton, but what can I say to them? They have the Bible; if Christians will not obey it, they will not hear though one arose from the dead. If the condition of the heathen as exposed to eternal ruin, & that dying love of Christ to sinners, will not induce Christians to do their duty. then I have not hope that anything I can say about the bodily sufferings of the heathen, such as burning widows, swinging on hooks &c. will have any effect. It is an unhealthy state in the church which needs such means to actuate them to duty. Never until the church can settle down on the broad, firm basis, of denying themselves, & acting from pure love to Christ & his cause, can this cause flourish.

Should there be any in the Society who anticipate coming as missionaries to this country they would wish & expect that one already in the field might give some useful hints in reference to preparation for the work & for the station. I have called to mind frequently the advice of our venerable Professors, "not to neglect or slight any part of the prescribed course of studies, for it is impossible for any man to know beforehand in what circumstances he may find himself placed". No one can know before hand just how he may be situated, or what work he may have to do. Should he be stationed at a place where there are some of his own country, or language, it will be his duty to act towards these (as far as possible, consistent with his duties as a missionary) in the capacity of pastor, & if he has slighted any part the course, so wisely prescribed in the Seminary, he will find reason to regret it --- & if he neglects proper attention to his health he will regret this -- but above all he cannot, without immense loss, neglect the cultivation of religion in the soul. He must not take it as a thing of course, that if he is a missionary he will necessarily be a pious man. There are temptations to the missionary, as well as to all others, to crowd devotional exercises into too small a portion of time. No press of duties can be an excuse for this, & no other attainments will make up for the loss.

Almost every person that has had any thing to do with the Chinese language has given his judgment of it as a most difficult language. I know too little of it to venture an opinion. I have noticed this, that among such as I have been privileged to be acquainted with, those who know most of the written language speak most of its difficulties, & of its imperfection as a medium of communication - but in saying this I am aware that I speak improperly, because the most perfect Chinese scholars are in their writing most difficult to be understood, because of the transpositions & eliptical expressions - It requires a long time to be able to understand a Chinese book; I mean, it requires much study before the Chinese youth are able to take up any book, call off the characters, & understand their meaning - for, as you know, they are first taught the character - to call it by its name in Mandarin & unless they understand this dialect they of course are but little wiser from what they read, until they have learned both its name, & its signification in the vulgar dialect... A Chinese scholar reading for the instruction of a company, though they all may have books before them, is obliged to expend much breath, & a great quantity of words to make the author understood by the audience. From this perhaps you would infer that the spoken language is simple & plain. It may be, but I have been told that it is very ambiguous - that much explanation is needed to prevent misunderstanding; & I should think that few people make more talk about a little thing than the Chinese do.

Difficult as the Chinese language is, many have attained a degree of perfection in it, - far less time is requisite in learning to converse so as to be understood, than in learning to read, yet neither should appear so formidable to those who have already found themselves able to make progress in the study of dead languages. Most of the missionaries, members of our Board, in China are at the present time giving attention, mostly, to the spoken language, & none, I think, are discouraged in the attempt. - The character, however, should not be neglected

entirely -- Children must be taught (some) in their own language, & though Chinese teachers may be employed for this, yet we should be able to oversee them; & besides, books must be translated. Were I now in the Seminary, & expecting to become a missionary to the Chinese, I think I could find many fragments of time which could be profitably employed in getting some knowledge of the Chinese written language & during the voyage I would make the language my study, despite ~~the~~ any amount of kind advice to the contrary -- To know the meaning of a character, & its composition is one thing acquired, & not a small thing either; to know its sound is another thing, & though you may not be able to get this, you can get an approximation to it - at least get an idea of it, which cannot but be an assistance -- This study will give one a start, & such a commencement is not a small gratification to one who finds himself in the midst of people to whom he was sent to preach glad tidings; & where the only thing which hinders the immediate commencement of his Work, is the want of a medium of communication.

I have not yet told you about myself - how I am, or what I am about. I am perfectly well as yet - neither myself or Mrs Loomis have suffered any perceptible change of health in our change of climate - We are now residing on the island of Chusan, which, as you know, remains in the possession of the English until January next - Whether, after that time, foreigners may reside here, remains to be known -- It would be desirable to retain this as a health station, but if we cannot - Ningpo & its adjacent country & villages is large enough to employ all of us, & many more. --- The wicked & drunken soldiers here are at present no very great help to us, by way of introducing foreigners to the favorable notice the Chusan people. Yet they are capable of understanding the difference between Americans & English & between Soldiers & religious teachers.

Brethren you wont forget us when you pray - you must not forget us when your office is to feed the flock of God - you must not forget by what means the Missionary work must be supported

Affectionately your brother W Loomis